

April Paruk

THE
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. V.

BOSTON, APRIL 15, 1843.

No. 8.

THE COMET.—VALUE OF SCIENCE.

CENTURIES have passed away since the happening of any event better calculated to impress the reflecting mind with a sense of *the value of knowledge*, than the appearance of the splendid comet which now nightly exhibits its brilliant train in the western sky; and perhaps other centuries may roll by before any more impressive or instructive spectacle shall again summon the world to acknowledge their indebtedness to science, and to pay their homage to its successful disciples.

Comets teach us one thing in regard to God; another in regard to man. They open our minds to some conception of the vastness of the Creator's works; and they convince us of the sublime range and compass of the mental faculties by which the vastness of those works has been so far explored. It is not pretended by any one that our knowledge of these celestial bodies has been communicated to us by any supernatural revelation. On the contrary, that knowledge is universally conceded to be the result and the reward of human effort and human cultivation, employing the noble capacities with which the race has been endowed by its Maker. The improvable capacities themselves, we owe to the bounty of heaven; but that exalted culture of the intellect by which these great achievements have been effected, we owe to human effort and toil and sacrifice.

When one gazes at the present comet, and considers its distance, the velocity of its motion, and the length of the journey which it has just completed, and is now just recommencing, how insignificant do all our common ideas of space or extension become. How striking the disparity between the diminutiveness of our own bodies and the grandeur of the soul that inhabits them. Our material part is little more than an imperceptible speck upon the earth's surface. It has been well said, and with literal truth, that the minute irregularities upon the rind of an orange have a greater altitude in proportion to its whole diameter, than the highest mountain in the world has to the diameter of the earth;—that is, the little irregularities upon the surface of an orange, are to its whole bulk or mass, more than the Alps or the Andes are to the globe. Yet what is the size or altitude of a man when compared with Mont Blanc, or the Himalaya? Indeed, when our minds have dwelt long upon these disparities, we turn back, and feel almost an involuntary impulse to take up a microscope, that we may be enabled to see each other. Such is the diminutiveness of the human body, when contrasted with the bulk of the planet on which it dwells.

But yet the immortal resident within this atom-like form,—the intellectual nature,—is not only capable of spanning the earth, and measuring the vast orbit through which it annually runs, but it is

able to spring forth into the fields of immensity, to follow the comet outward into the illimitable regions of space, and to trace out the path along which, after a flight of years or of centuries, it shall return.

Let any one who may read these remarks, ask himself, how long *he* must live, with his powers in their present state of cultivation, with his present pursuits and present habits of thought, before he could acquire such knowledge for himself. If it were not paradoxical, we should say that he could express the period necessary to enable him to accomplish such a work, only by the phrase, *an infinity of eternities*. What a difference, then, between one man and another; between our own, and the great minds which have brought these truths to light!

But there is a view of the subject which renders the value of our knowledge in regard to comets, still more important; and, of course, enthrones the intellects which have discovered that knowledge, upon a loftier eminence.

Although each comet obeys the universal law of gravitation, and, of course, has motions always consistent with themselves; yet, when compared with each other, the comets are different in their appearances, and very irregular in their periodic returns. They are unlike the earth, whose alternation of day and night, and whose vicissitude of seasons, are uniform and harmonious. They are unlike the planets, all whose orbits lie within the narrow path of the zodiac. They are unlike the fixed stars, which seem to stand forever in their appointed places. But the comets, so far as we can discover, form no *system* of themselves. They have nothing corresponding with the zodiacal pathway through the heavens, but they fly deviously towards all points in the void spaces of immensity. Sometimes several are seen in a single year, and then years elapse, before any one returns from its long journey to the goal of the sun. To the uninstructed, all this renders the appearance of every comet an extraordinary phenomenon; and such is the constitution of the human mind, that all extraordinary appearances excite alarm. The more unusual and imposing the spectacle, the greater the tumult of fear and anxiety which it excites in the minds of men. Hence comets, in past ages, and amongst all ignorant people, have been regarded with awe and dread. The wisest among men, not knowing how to account for them, instead of allaying the apprehensions of the vulgar, only inflamed their superstitious fears. They suggested false causes, whose fallacy could not be detected, and predicted calamitous consequences which no mortal agency could withstand. Comets, therefore, have been regarded as the harbingers of every species of misfortune and catastrophe to which the human race is liable. These false and afflictive ideas, having once taken possession of the common mind, were handed down by tradition from parents to children. As those who were esteemed learned on other subjects, and who, therefore, gave the law to public opinion, were ignorant upon this, their views only aggravated the heritage of error and of calamity, which descended from one generation to another.

It would be easy to fill volumes with historical accounts of the wide-spread panics which the appearance of comets has caused. The terrors they formerly spread were not occasional, but uniform;—not applying to here and there an individual, but, like death itself, embracing all ranks and classes of men. A few facts will

serve to show what mankind have gained by the progress of science within the last few generations.

"In 1456, a large comet made its appearance. It spread a wider terror than was ever known before. The belief was very general, among all classes, that the comet would destroy the earth, and that the Day of Judgment was at hand! At the time of the appearance of this comet, the Turks extended their victorious arms across the Hellespont, and seemed destined to overrun all Europe. This added not a little to the general gloom. Under all these impressions, the people seemed totally regardless of the present, and anxious only for the future. The Romish Church held at this time unbounded sway over the lives, and fortunes, and consciences of men. To prepare the world for its expected doom, Pope Calixtus III. ordered the Ave Maria to be repeated three times a day, instead of two. He ordered the church bells to be rung at noon, which was the origin of that practice so universal in Christian churches.

"To the Ave Maria, the prayer was added,—'Lord, save us from the Devil, the Turk, and the Comet;' and once each day, these three obnoxious personages suffered a regular excommunication. The Pope and clergy exhibiting such fear, it is not a matter of wonder that it became the ruling passion of the multitude. The churches and convents were crowded for the confession of sins; and treasures uncounted were poured into the apostolic chamber. The comet, after suffering some months of daily cursing and excommunication, began to show signs of retreat, and soon disappeared from those eyes in which it found no favor. Joy and tranquillity soon returned to the faithful subjects of the Pope; but not so their money and land. The people, however, became satisfied that their lives and the safety of the world had been cheaply purchased. The Pope, who had achieved so signal a victory over the monster of the sky, had checked the progress of the Turk, and kept, for the present, his Satanic majesty at a safe distance; while the Church of Rome, retaining her unbounded wealth, was enabled to continue that influence over her followers, which she retains in part to this day."

These false views were incorporated into the literature of the times, and thus the sanction of great names gave authority to popular error. Shakspeare, who was contemporary with Queen Elizabeth, (or rather,—to refer the small to the great,—with whom Queen Elizabeth was contemporary,) has the following:—

Bedford. Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night;
Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky;
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death.

Henry VI., Act 1st, Scene 1st.

Milton, who wrote less than two centuries ago, adopts and ratifies all the superstitions of the most ignorant on this subject.

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform; on the other side,
Incens'd with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiucus huge

*In th' arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war.*

Milton's Paradise Lost, Book 2d, line 704.

High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
*Fierce as a comet; which with horrid heat,
And vapor as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime.*

Paradise Lost, Book 12, line 639.

The following is from the introduction of a "LECTURE ON THE COMET," lately delivered at the Odeon, Boston, by that distinguished mathematician, Professor Pierce, of Harvard University, Cambridge.

"There is a spirituality in the appearance of comets, with their ethereal train, which deeply touches the mystical strings of our nature; and the superstition of many a wise man has regarded them with apprehension. 'It hath pleased the Almighty,' said one of our old worthies, 'in drawing up and publishing to the world the great and glorious volume of his works, to place them [comets] in the margin there, as red letters, asterisms, or pointing hands, to awaken unto a more heedful attention, and serious consideration the dead-hearted, sleeping and secure world of mankind.' From the refined opinion of Democritus, that comets are spirits, which, having completed their term of existence on the earth, celebrate their last triumphs, and are recalled to heaven in the form of shining stars, to that of the Spanish monk, who regarded them as sent by some infernal demon as messengers of evil, or of Increase Mather, who considered them to be 'the *scythes* with which Heaven mows down sinners,' the most various supernatural offices, especially of a malignant character, have been imputed to them. Not content with causing wars and famines, with dethroning monarchs and dissolving empires, they have condescended to perplex the affairs of the meanest individuals. 'It is of consequence,' said Pliny, 'to note the parts towards which the comet is shooting, the constellations whose influence it receives, and the particular aspects it assumes. If the comet have the form of flageolets, then it portends something to musicians; wo betide those who are in love, if it be seen near the girdle; it refers to artists and learned men if it resemble a triangular or four-sided figure; and if it be situated in the head of the dragon, it sprinkles poisonous matter.' The dread seems to have been augmented with the brilliancy of the appearance; and when seen by day, there was no calamity too frightful for them to prognosticate. Even in this enlightened age such a phenomenon seems by some to be regarded as the forerunner of some mighty convulsion in which 'the great globe itself' may be dissolved, or at least, the human race extirpated. But the wand of knowledge must ere long dissipate all these delusions. The comets are found to revolve as peaceably about the sun as the planets themselves, and to return at regular intervals, the periods of which have in many cases been exactly determined. Thus, of the two comets of 1402, each of which was seen for several successive days at midday, and excited the greatest anxiety and terror, the first has been found to have a period of 130 years. Its early history is interesting, from the disasters with which it was associated. At that very time indeed, it actually caused the death of the Prince Visconti, whose end had been predicted

by astrologers to follow such an appearance, and who died thanking God for having announced his death to men by this celestial sign. In the year 1274, it appeared three days before the death of the holy Thomas Aquinas. In 1147 it preceded the crusade of the Emperor Conrad. In the year 632 it was the celebrated figure of the sword which blazed in the heavens for thirty days after the death of Mahomet, and in the year eleven before Christ, it appeared suspended over the city of Rome previously to the death of Agrippa. Fortunately for its reputation, its baneful influence at its other returns has not been recorded; and still more fortunately, its cause has at length been espoused by science, and its character completely vindicated, by demonstrating its implicit obedience to the universal law of gravitation.

"The philosopher Seneca, dissatisfied with the doctrine of his time respecting them, and unable to substitute a better, foretold that 'in future ages some man would demonstrate in what parts of the heavens the comets wander, why they depart so far from the other wandering stars, and what sort of bodies they are.' 'This prediction,' said Professor Winthrop, in a lecture on comets, delivered in 1759, on occasion of one which appeared at that time, 'has been fulfilled at the present age,—and that man is Sir Isaac Newton. After many centuries elapsed, with little insight gained into the true constitution of these bodies, this great genius arose, and with a strength of mind peculiar to himself, I had almost said more than human,—

'Pursued the comets where they farthest run,
And brought them back obsequious to the sun.'

"Some sudden changes of climate, and of the form of the earth's surface, and the deluge itself, have been attributed to comets, even by scientific men of modern times; and an English physician, Mr. Foster, has maintained as a certainty, that 'ever since the Christian era, the most unhealthy periods have been precisely those in which some great comet has appeared,—that the approach of these bodies to our earth has always been accompanied by earthquakes, eruptions of volcanoes, &c.; whereas no comet has ever been seen during the salubrious periods. He has even gone so far as to register, as consequences of the appearance of some comet, hot and cold seasons, droughts, tempests, hurricanes, violent storms, fogs, freshets, famines, flies, grasshoppers, plagues, and various contagious diseases. To all this a single argument of Arago's is a sufficient reply,—that by making out for each year a complete catalogue of all the miseries of this lower world, any one might foresee that a comet could never approach the earth without finding a part of its inhabitants suffering under some calamity or other.' Arago has also, in his tract upon the comet of 1832, carefully investigated each species of these imputed malignant influences, and triumphantly exhibited their entire fallacy."

We might prolong this article to any extent, in giving details of the absurd and frightful opinions, in relation to comets, which have infested the minds of men; and, from age to age, have murdered the peace of mankind. Enough, however, has been said to show how necessary it is, not only to our positive well-being, but to our exemption from one of the most extensive classes of mental sufferings, that we should be in *intellectual*, as well as *moral* harmony with the

world in which we have been placed. Whatever we do not know of the objects which are around us, and which obviously and forcibly strike the senses, is not indifferent to us;—it becomes, as it were, our active and living enemy. It counterworks our plans. It assails us with forces which we know not how to resist or elude. It tortures us with causeless anxieties and affright. It is only by knowledge that all the phenomena and laws of nature can be converted from foes into friends and allies.

But a reflection more direct and apposite to our present purpose is this: Why is it that the approach of this splendid visitant, whose vast and gorgeous train, though at the distance of a hundred millions of miles, shoots upward from the horizon half-way to the meridian, and which is nightly gazed upon with admiration and delight, not by thousands only, but by millions and millions of mankind, and which will be remembered and spoken of with joy for more than half a century to come, by those who now actually behold it with their own eyes;—why is it, we ask, that this splendid object, instead of being, as it is, a spectacle of delight, is not, as in former times, a fearful prodigy, filling the hearts of men with consternation and alarm? Why may it not now be said of this, as it has been said of its predecessors, that it

“Terror sheds,
On gazing nations, from his fiery train
Of length enormous!”

Why are not our whole people now stricken with affright, and striving to propitiate the imagined wrath of Heaven by prostration and servile prayers, by howling out incantations, or even by the sacrifice of human victims, in the hope of averting a supposed divine or infernal vengeance? Why are not the hearts of all the inhabitants of this land, from ocean to ocean, woven, as it were, into one web, and thrills of horror vibrating from side to side, through all its tissue? Whiston supposed comets to be places of torture for lost souls,—in which they were alternately brought near to the sun where they were heated a hundred thousand times hotter than red hot iron, and then borne away into opposite regions to become a hundred thousand times colder than ice. Why are we not now under the dominion of some such superstition? There is but one answer. The only reason is, that a few great men, while their contemporaries were engaged in the perpetration of flagrant crimes,—in war, in human robbery or oppression;—or while those contemporaries were indulging in appetite, or in vain and frivolous amusements,—in epicurism, in ostentation of wealth or of dress, in courts, and theatres, and balls,—these glorious benefactors of their race were devoting themselves, with their whole souls, to the contemplation and study of the wonderful works of God, and of the laws which he has established for their government. We owe it to the great lovers and cultivators of science, that we are not now sunk in all the miseries and degradation of a debasing superstition upon this subject. We owe it to them that we have higher and juster views of the plan of the creation, and of the wisdom of its Author; and it is beyond finite power to express or comprehend the amount of this indebtedness.

NOTE.—The above article was written while the comet was visible, from the earth. It has now disappeared.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN.

BLACK-BOARD INSTRUCTION.

THE communications received evince an almost universal neglect, by our district school teachers, to use the black-board as a means of instruction; and even in the few instances where it has been tried, but an occasional teacher appeared to comprehend its object or understand its use. Now, it is safe to say, that no mechanical invention ever effected greater improvements in machinery, no discovery of new agents more signal revolutions in all the departments of science, than the black-board has effected in schools; and certain it is, that no apparatus, at all comparable with it for simplicity and cheapness, has, to such a degree, facilitated the means, and augmented the pleasures, of primary instruction. Whatever objection to other school apparatus economy or necessity may suggest, none can reasonably bear against this. The materials for its construction are as abundant and accessible as the forests, and the merest tyro of a mechanic in any district can fashion one for all ordinary purposes. It consists of nothing but a soft, planed board, varying in size from three to six or eight feet square, as circumstances may require, and painted black or stained with logwood.* Sometimes it is nothing more than a parallelogram blacked out upon the walls, as in the upper village schoolhouse of Ann Arbor, and in the lecture-room of the University. Whether upon the walls or in a frame, it should be in full view of the whole school. Portable black-boards, however, are indispensable in large schools. With this simple instrument, and a piece of chalk, revolutions have taken place in schools. And if stern necessity destines our schools to plod on, year after year, without uniformity of books, the immediate resort to black-board instruction is suggested as a speedy and most effective relief. Ten years ago, only colleges and the higher order of academies called black-boards into requisition; and then only to solve an equation in Euler or demonstrate a proposition in Euclid. But why should not our schools begin to learn their uses and appreciate their inestimable advantages? Teachers will be astonished, as well as delighted, at the results of a single trial. They will find, if they begin right, in teaching the primary branches, that amusement may be so combined with instruction as to facilitate progress with great rapidity, and at the same time develop the perceptive and reflective faculties in a manner hardly deemed possible by the old vexatious methods. Heretofore, months of uninterrupted torture have elapsed before a child, after commencing with his first book, could, even by forced marches, make his way through the alphabet; and other months before he could attach an idea to the shapeless signs ever in his eye and always in his dreams. But now, with the black-board before him, and intelligibility in every word or character upon it, he learns to read, spell, draw, write, cipher, and *think* with greater facility, and far more satisfactorily, than formerly he could learn, from memory, to repeat that senseless jargon upon the

* In every school there should be an extent of black-board sufficient to allow the largest class in geography or arithmetic to stand before it together, and draw maps or solve problems simultaneously.—ED.

first page of every primer nicknamed a-b ab; e-b eb; u-b ub, and so on to b-o-g bog! In fact, experiments with children beginning to learn, prove the inutility of the alphabet as a first lesson. Let them launch at once into the world of words. Write upon the black-board names of things most familiar to the child,—as man, boy, girl, book, table, doll, horse, chair, &c. Pronounce them, and require the child to repeat, its finger and eye being upon the word. The letters in combination, which, isolated, had no meaning to him, present a familiar picture, and convey to his mind a distinct idea. Of man, the living form, walking about, or at rest, he has already a correct idea. If pointed out, he readily calls him *man*. Just so with *man* on the black-board. The three letters in combination, seen and pronounced, bring before him the same living form. His eye retains the picture, his ear the sound, and his mind the idea of that magic word, and he will afterwards, on seeing or hearing it, recall the idea as easily as if the living form were before him. How much more accordant with nature is this beautiful, and, to the child, delightful mode of instruction, than the old-fashioned one of grinding him down to the unintelligible pot-hook, crooked S, and round O of the alphabet! To learn letters is a work of analysis, and of course requires the aid of faculties not sufficiently developed in childhood. Show a child something as a *whole*, and he gets a full idea of it and retains it; show him mere *parts* of that whole,—and letters are but parts or elements of words,—and, attaching to them no idea, he finds it difficult to retain, still more so to recall them.* But there is no time to enlarge upon this subject. It is sufficient to say, that no teacher, who has tried the black-board, and understood its use, has given it up.

SECTARIANISM.

But, in excluding sectarianism from all schools supported by the public purse, the cardinal virtues must not be banished. Without virtue, no system of instruction can perfect its work. If the teacher

* "The general practice [of teaching the alphabet first] is founded upon the notion that the learning of letters facilitates the correct combination of them into words. Hence children are drilled in the alphabet until they pronounce the name of each letter at sight. And yet, when we combine letters into words, we forthwith discard the sounds which belonged to them as letters. The child is taught to sound the letter *a*, until he becomes so familiar with it that the sound is uttered as soon as the character is seen. But the first time the letter is found, even in the most familiar words, as in *father, papa, mamma, apple, peach, walnut, hat, cap, bat, rat, slap, pan, &c. &c.*, it no longer has the sound he was before taught to give it, but one entirely different. And so of the other vowels. In words they all seem in masquerade. Where is the alphabetic sound of *e*, in the words *word, dove, plough, enough, other*, and in innumerable others? Any person may verify this, by taking any succession of words, at random, in any English book. The consequence is, that when the child meets his old friends in new company, like rogues, they have all changed their names. Thus the knowledge of the sounds of the letters in the alphabet becomes an obstacle to the right pronunciation of words; and the more perfect the knowledge the greater the obstacle. The reward of the child for having thoroughly mastered his letters is, to have his knowledge of them cut up in detail, by a regular series of contradictions, just as fast as he brings it forward. How different, for instance, is the sound of the word *is*, from the two alphabetic sounds *i* and *s*;—of the word *we*, from the sounds *w* and *e*—of the word *two*, from the three sounds *t*, *w* and *o*. We teach an honest child to sound the letters *e, y, e*, singly, until he utters them at sight, and then, with a grave face, we ask him what *e, y, e*, spells; and if he does not give the long sound of *i*, he is lucky if he escapes a rebuke or a frown. Nothing can more clearly prove the delightful confidence and trustfulness of a child's nature, than his not boldly charging us, under such circumstances, with imposition and fraud."

HORACE MANN.

is fit to be placed over a school, he will, by precept and his own exemplary conduct, teach all that the most rigid morality can ask. More than this, would be trenching on forbidden ground; less, would be conclusive evidence of unfitness for his place. Let justice, for instance, be taught on every occasion that presents itself in the school. Make the child understand that stealing, false dealing, lying, fraud, oppression, bribery, and all other forms of injustice, are wrong, and, if indulged in, surely productive of unhappiness. Let him talk against avarice, and, while recommending the pursuits of industry and honest gain, keep constantly in mind the maxim that "the love of money is the root of all evil." Let him condemn slander, hypocrisy in social and religious intercourse, anger, blasphemy, evil communications, and other pernicious practices; and, by conversation interwoven with instruction, depict their consequences. Let him inculcate brotherly love, duties to parents and society, and the peace-giving pleasures of benevolence, kindness, amiable manners and forgiveness of injuries. Let him talk about temperance, and the terrible evils of intemperance. A teacher, who feels right on these subjects, and whose daily example is made to prove it, will make himself familiar with such maxims as these,— "Do as you would be done by,"—"Abhor evil and cling to that which is good,"—"Evil communications corrupt good manners,"—"Honor thy father and mother,"—"Love your enemies,"—"Forgive injuries,"—and a multitude of similar maxims that can be gleaned from the Scriptures and other good writings. Above all, let distinct ideas of the greatness and all-pervading goodness of God be given, and but little of moral instruction will be left untaught.

COSTLINESS OF IGNORANCE.

The Legislature would be astonished at the aggregate of crime, which has cursed Michigan with its hideous immoralities and enormous expenses within the last two years. For the purpose of presenting indubitable facts under this head, the several county clerks have been requested to furnish such criminal statistics of their counties as were attainable. Owing to various circumstances, the information sought has been only partially obtained. Enough, however, has come to light, to satisfy any mind, that the best way to clear criminal dockets, and avoid criminal legislation, is by a more generous legislation for Common Schools. The five counties of Monroe, Macomb, Washtenaw, Oakland and Wayne only will be consulted.

The expenses connected with the administration of justice in Monroe, for 1841, amounted to \$1,740 61. Of this amount \$825 56 were for jurors; \$412 13 for sheriffs; \$128 30 for associate justices; \$324 54 for witnesses in criminal cases, and for prisoners' counsel. The exact amount of *purely* criminal business is not given.

Macomb, the last year, has paid about \$632 for criminal expenses. A jail, which cost, in 1841, about \$1,000, has been burned down, and must, of course, be re-built at as great, if not greater cost. There have been nineteen indictments, and but three or four acquittals as yet.

It is difficult to ascertain the precise amount of criminal business in Washtenaw. The jail cost not far from \$20,000. In 1839, the expenses attending criminal prosecutions, including the attendance of sheriffs and associate judges, and sums paid grand and petty jurors, were \$5,148 71; in 1840, \$4,582 84; in 1841, \$3,466 11; in 1842, \$3,127 91,—in four years, \$16,325 57. This includes nothing for lights and fuel for courts, very little for fees of witnesses in criminal cases, nothing for the support of such witnesses by order of the court, and no part of the interest paid annually on a loan of \$8,000 to build the court-house.

Among the criminal items of Oakland for 1841, as published by the commissioners, are the following: Grand and petty jurors, \$628 20; justices of the peace in criminal cases, \$326 89; prisoners, for board, washing, clothing, and fuel, \$931 15; sheriff in criminal cases, \$961 10; constable fees in criminal cases, \$1,449 74; prosecuting attorneys, \$1,057 85; and \$342 38 for pursuing prisoners, for grand jury rooms, boarding jurors and witnesses in criminal cases, medical aid to prisoners and other small matters,—amounting to \$5,697 27. Then, \$2,117 05 were paid for associate justices, summoning jurors, attendance of sheriff and deputies, printing presentments, and other items, of which portions are chargeable to the criminal list.

Wayne presents some formidable statistics. The cost of the jail, being a very "old one," cannot be ascertained; but the expenses attending it in 1841 were \$3,000. The criminal court, for the March, June, September and December terms, cost \$2,876 70. The miscellaneous accounts allowed that year amounted to \$6,608 49; and some of them were such *items* as these: Jailor, for boarding prisoners, \$1,722 68; fuel for jail, \$200; repairs of jail, \$892 18. These items make part of the \$3,000 given above. The fees of the prosecuting attorney were \$1,250. The total expenses of the county were \$16,000. And the difference, says the county clerk, between 1841 and 1842, "is very trifling." *Only* 113 indictments were found that year! And these were for such *trifling* violations of law as larceny, forgery, perjury, conspiracy, lasciviousness, passing counterfeit money, adultery, extortion, and the "legion" family of assaults! *One-third* of them were for larceny, *one-fourth* for assault and battery. No less than 37, convicted under these indictments, have been sent to the state prison for periods of from six months to five years,—a majority for two years and upwards. Thus, the state has upon its hands the care and maintenance of felons, convicted in one county in one year, for the interesting period of 63 years. And in addition, "old Wayne County jail" has had *its* partition of the *chateaux personal* for that year!!

In view of these and other facts furnished throughout this report, the good will of the Legislature, in behalf of Common Schools, is earnestly solicited.

To apprehend danger from the education of the people, is like fearing lest the thunderbolt strike into the house because it has *windows*; whereas the lightning never comes through these, but through their *lead* framing, or down by the *smoke* of the chimney.—*Jean Paul.*

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT MADE TO THE NEW YORK HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, BY THE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGES, ACADEMIES, AND COMMON SCHOOLS. MR. HULBURD, CHAIRMAN.

THE general education of the people forms the best preventive of crime. The reports of the Prison Discipline Society contain some striking facts, showing how intimately crime and ignorance are allied. Mr. Pilsbury, keeper of the Connecticut state prison at Weathersfield, says, "No convict has ever been in this prison who was liberally educated; and the proportion of those who can read and write is but eight in one hundred." At Sing-Sing, only fifty out of eight hundred and fifty-two convicts had received anything like an education. In the new penitentiary, in Philadelphia, of two hundred and seventeen prisoners received in 1835, sixty-three could neither read nor write, sixty could read only, and eighty-five could read and write very indifferently. Of the prisoners in the jails of London in 1836, '37, '38, but nine in one hundred could read and write, and not one in a hundred had ever been carefully taught his moral and religious duties. Out of nine hundred and ninety-five convicts in the jails of Lancaster, England, but seven were familiar with the Scriptures. Sir Richard Phillips, sheriff of London, says, that in a memorial addressed to the sheriffs by one hundred and fifty-two criminals in Newgate, twenty-five only signed their names in a fair hand, twenty-six in an illegible scrawl, one hundred and one were *marksmen*. Few could read with facility; more than half could not read at all; most of them thought books useless. The chaplain of the Ohio penitentiary remarks: "Not only in our prison but in others, depraved appetites and corrupt habits, which have led to the commission of crime, are usually found with the *ignorant, uninformed*, and duller part of mankind. Of two hundred and seventy-six prisoners, nearly all below mediocrity, one hundred and seventy-five are grossly ignorant, and in point of education, scarcely capable of transacting the ordinary business of life."

On the other hand, in Prussia, after the school system, perfected in 1819, had been in operation fourteen years, while the population of the kingdom had increased three per cent., the proportion of paupers and criminals had decreased thirty-eight per cent. Out of more than 3000 children of the poorest class in London, taught in the Gower Walk school, *not one has ever been convicted* of an offence against the laws of the country. It appears by the census of 1840, out of 2,420,921 population of this State, were 43,705 whites, or one in fifty-six, of the age of twenty years and upwards, who can neither read nor write; as often as one of the 2,377,216, becomes an inmate of the state prison, three of the 43,705 accompany him. The committee might institute comparisons between Massachusetts, with her 737,699 inhabitants, of which only one to every 166 over twenty years of age cannot read or write, and Mississippi with her 375,651 population, of which one to every twenty, over twenty years of age, can neither read nor write; or between the United States, with her population of 17,062,566, of which number over twenty years of age are only 584,457 who are unable to read and write, and Great Britain with her twenty-four millions of ignorant pauper population; but we forbear. All history demonstrates that the prevention of pauperism and crime is much less expensive than the relief of the one class and the punishment of the other. The statis-

tics already adduced in proof of the munificent provisions made by government, to foster education, are the results of the wisest forethought to increase the industry and wealth of the country. But it is not that partial system which adopts the motto of English education; "learn, that you may get on;" or our American version, "learn, that you may *rise* in the world." With some parents and teachers this is the guiding object, the beginning and the end of all education; forgetting that there may be much instruction, much discipline of the intellect, often to the dwarfing of the physical powers, to the total neglect of the culture of the heart. Thus imperfectly and unequally educated, the child grows up, shrewd indeed, and intelligent in business transactions, but in all else the veriest slave of earth-born passions. The spirit of the age requires there should be education for *all*, but does not require the education of the *whole man*. It encourages the premature development of the intellect as ensuring early success and consideration. May not here be found the true cause why so many of the highly gifted, filling stations of honor and trust, have, within the last few months, in the hour of temptation, fallen; fallen from their high estate; fallen to the felon's cell, to the scaffold's ignominy, or down to that lower deep of infamy, *self-murder*? May not here be found the unnoticed cause of the innumerable excitements and popular delusions which are now sweeping over the breadth of the land, making converts and victims and maniacs, as well from the athletic as the weak, from the *morally* educated as well as the *intellectually* ignorant?

Inviting as would be this field of investigation and reflection, the committee are constrained to leave it, and hasten to the conclusion of this report. In doing this, they cannot forbear the expression of an earnest hope, that the lofty spirit of our State motto, *EXCELSIOR*, will, in all that pertains to the diffusion of knowledge, pervade "the decrees and purposes of present and future legislation," until, in the words of a former report, we not only speak of, but present "the spectacle of an educated people; educated to the top of their faculties, as physical, organized, intellectual, moral and religious beings; educated above want and above pride, above fear and above reproach; educated to know what truth is, what charity is, what justice is, what liberty is; educated to be generous and peaceful, and free and happy; educated to understand and feel, and respond to every call of duty and of patriotism; educated out of vice and meanness, and into lofty thoughts and noble sentiments; educated for home, for pleasure, for business; educated for themselves, for their families and kindred, for their friends and for their country."

By learning, the sons of common people become great; without learning, the sons of the great become mingled with the mass of the people.—*Chinese Proverb*.

Let but a tittle of the effort be used in our own school districts to elevate the condition of our Common Schools that is used in the same districts to elevate a political party to power, and a millennium would diffuse itself over our beloved State.—*Boston Post*.

[From the Congregational Journal.]

YOUTHFUL HONESTY.

As Deacon Seward was sitting one Sabbath evening in his beautiful arbor, in the rear of his garden, meditating upon the sermons he had heard during the day, and enjoying sweet communion with God, his attention was arrested by the conversation of two little boys, who were standing outside of the garden, with their eyes fastened on a pear tree, loaded with its luscious fruit. He was unobserved; for a luxuriant grape vine, with its thick foliage, covered the trelliswork of the summer-house, and almost excluded the rays of the sun itself.

"Robert," said John Howe, "Robert, I have been thinking all day about Deacon Seward's pear-tree, and I have made up my mind that I would have some of the pears this very night. That's the reason I asked you to walk with me. Now, Bob, I will creep through the fence and shake the tree, and you must pick up your hat full, and then we will have a good time eating them."

"Why, John," exclaimed little Robert, "if I had known what you wanted, I would not have come with you. I love pears as well as you, but I can never consent to get them in this way. I would rather go and ask Mr. Seward for them, or not have them at all."

"But Robert, Deacon Seward will not miss them, and if he does, he will not know who got them; and what hurt can it do?"

"True, John, but ever since Mr. L. requested children to commit the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm to memory, I thought it a very small matter whether I was seen by man or not, as long as I knew that God saw me. There was a time when I would have taken these pears; but I cannot now."

But poor John Howe had never been taught the one hundred and thirty-ninth psalm; and he said, "Well, you may do as you please, Bob, but I mean to have some of the Deacon's pears." So he began to creep through the fence.

"Wait one minute, John," said Robert, "and let me repeat to you a few verses of that psalm."

John paused, and little Robert proceeded very solemnly through the first twelve verses. When he came to the last two, "If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; darkness and light are both alike to thee,"—John had started back, and was standing trembling at his side. "Well, Robert," said he, "that is all new to me; I never felt so before. Come, let us go home, and I promise you, if you will not tell anybody what I have been doing, I will never do so again. I should like to read the whole of that psalm. Where shall I find it?"

"In the Bible, John." But poor John had no Bible, for his father and mother were what they call Infidels, and had no Bible in their house.

"Bible!" said John, "I have got no Bible; I wish I had one."

"I will lend you mine," said Robert, "till you can get one;" and so saying they returned to their homes.

Deacon Seward's heart overflowed with tears of joy, at the result of this conversation; and after thanking God for this new proof of his power, he returned to his house. The next morning a servant

was despatched, with a basket in each hand, to little Robert Baker and John Howe. Upon opening his, John found a large number of fine yellow pears, and a handsomely bound pocket Bible, with a mark in it at the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm, and a note from Deacon Seward, stating that he had overheard the conversation of the evening, and was happy to find that little John was so willing to abandon his evil course, as soon as he heard the word of God. The note expressed the hope that John would read the Bible through, and the assurance that the Deacon would never reveal what he had heard to any one. When Robert opened his basket, he found some fine pears, and a handsome little volume, entitled "ANECDOTES,—The Young," by the Religious Tract Society, and a mark in at the sixty-fifth page. It contained also a note, stating that the Deacon had heard the conversation between him and John Howe, and expressed a great deal of pleasure on account of Robert's honesty and regard for the word of God.

Robert then read the piece to which the Deacon had directed his attention.

"A poor chimney-sweeper's boy was employed at the house of a lady of rank, to cleanse the chimney of her chamber. Finding himself on the hearth of the lady's dressing-room, and perceiving no one there, he waited a few minutes to take a view of the beautiful things in the apartment. A gold watch, richly set in diamonds, particularly caught his attention, and he could not forbear taking it in his hand. Immediately the wish arose in his mind, 'Ah, if thou hadst such a one!' After a pause he said to himself, 'But if I take it, I shall be a thief,—and yet,' continued he, 'no one sees me. No one? does not God see me, who is present everywhere? Should I then be able to say my prayers to him, after I had committed a theft! Could I die in peace?' Overcome by these thoughts, a cold shiver seized him. 'No!' said he, laying down the watch, 'I had much rather be poor and keep my good conscience, than rich and become a rogue.' At these words he hastened back into the chimney.

"The countess, who was in the room adjoining, having overheard his soliloquy, sent for him the next morning, and accosted him: 'My little friend, why did you not take the watch yesterday?' The boy fell on his knees, speechless and astonished. 'I heard everything you said,' continued her ladyship; 'thank God for enabling you to resist the temptation, and be watchful over yourself for the future; from this moment you shall be in my service. I will both maintain and clothe you; nay, more, I will procure you good instruction, that shall ever guard you from similar temptations.' The boy burst into tears; he was anxious to express his gratitude, but he could not. The countess strictly kept her promise, and had the pleasure to see him grow up a pious, intelligent man."

"RESPECT FOR THE LADIES.—Nothing sets so wide a mark between the vulgar and the noble soul, as the respect and reverential love of womanhood. A man who is always sneering at woman, is generally a coarse profligate, or a coarse bigot, no matter which."

"THE water that flows from a spring, does not congeal in winter. And those sentiments of friendship which flow from the heart, cannot be frozen by adversity."

SCHOOLHOUSE EXTRAORDINARY.

It appears from the results of a recent investigation, instituted under the authority of the Superintendent of Common Schools, and still in progress, that there is in the village of Matteawan and the town of Fishkill, Dutchess county, [state of New York,] a district comprising a taxable valuation of upwards of \$300,000, and four hundred children between the ages of five and sixteen, *which has never*, at all events within the recollection of the present inhabitants, *had a schoolhouse*; and in which, for the last nine or ten years, the school has been taught in the basement or cellar of a church, affording accommodations to about seventy or eighty children; so scantily lighted that frequently the teacher is obliged to dismiss his pupils an hour earlier than the usual time, and the walls of which are so damp that, to use the language of one of the witnesses, "you could **SCRAPE DAMPNES OFF THE WALL WITH THE HAND!**" At times, "the whole floor is covered with water two inches thick." In rainy weather the water enters the door-way, and **PASSES THROUGH THE FLOOR, THROUGH HOLES CUT FOR THE PURPOSE!** Underneath the floor is a **FROG POND**, in which the croaking of the frogs is plainly heard, and from which these **REPTILES HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY KNOWN TO EMERGE INTO THE SCHOOLROOM!!** One teacher, who had taught school for several seasons in other districts, and who found the employment conducive to his health, came into the school and was soon taken sick, and died; and he and others attributed his sickness to the dampness of the schoolroom. Great numbers of children, ordinarily rugged and healthy, were obliged to leave the school on this account; and whenever they returned to it, soon fell sick and were again obliged to be removed. Nearly all the witnesses examined concurred in opinion that the rooms were altogether unfit for use as schoolrooms; that they were damp, ill-lighted, inconvenient, ill-ventilated and unhealthful. And yet with a valuation of upwards of a quarter of a million of dollars, the inhabitants of this district, situated on the great thoroughfare to the metropolis, and in one of the oldest and wealthiest settlements of the State, have patiently tolerated the existence of this nuisance, fatal to the health and constitution of their children, and fraught with the deadly malaria of the grave! It is proper to add that the "Matteawan Company," a large manufacturing establishment, with a capital of \$250,000, is located in this district, having in its employ a large proportion of the inhabitants and their children, and exercising consequently all the influence, for good or for evil, with which such a corporation is usually invested. There are the strongest reasons for believing that the inhabitants of the district have been prevented from building a new schoolhouse by the predominating interests of this huge, and may we not add, in view of the facts here developed, *soul-less* corporation!

The medicinal virtues ascribed to many springs, to which people resort, in great numbers and from great distances, for bathing, are only the medicinal virtues of *cleanliness*.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY OF COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

Resolves in addition to a Resolve concerning School District Libraries.

Resolved, that the provisions of a Resolve of March 3, 1842, concerning School District Libraries be, and the same are, hereby extended to every city and town in the Commonwealth, not heretofore divided into school districts, in such manner as to give as many times fifteen dollars to every such city or town as the number sixty is contained, exclusive of fractions, in the number of children, between the ages of four and sixteen years, in said city or town; provided evidence be produced to the treasurer, in behalf of said city or town, of its having raised and appropriated, for the establishment of libraries, a sum equal to that which, by the provision of this Resolve, it is entitled to receive from the school fund.

Resolved, That the treasurer be instructed, under the advice and direction of the Governor and Council, to make sales, from time to time, of notes of hand, bank stock, and other securities, belonging to the school fund, to such amount as shall enable him to comply with the provisions of the above Resolve, and with those of the Resolve of March 3, 1842, concerning school district libraries.

Approved, March 7, 1843.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same:—

All property belonging to Common School districts, the income of which is appropriated to the purposes of education, is hereby exempted from taxation.

Approved, March 24, 1843.

AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows,—

Whenever a town shall determine that teachers shall be selected and contracted with by the prudential committees of the several districts, according to the provisions of the one hundred and fifth chapter of the laws of the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight, such a town or district may elect three persons as a prudential committee, who shall perform all the duties provided for in the twenty-fifth section of the twenty-third chapter of the Revised Statutes.

Approved; April 7, 1839.

LEXINGTON NORMAL SCHOOL. The next term of the Lexington Normal School will commence on Wednesday, the 3d day of May next. All who intend to present themselves for admission at the school, are requested to do so on the first day of the term, and to bring with them a Bible, Worcester's Pronouncing and Explanatory Dictionary, Worcester's Geography and Atlas, Porter's Rhetorical Reader, Colburn's First Lessons, Sequel and Algebra.

Lexington, March 15, 1843.

SAMUEL J. MAY, Principal.

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL; published semi-monthly, by WILLIAM B. FOWLE AND N. CAPEN, No. 184 Washington Street, (corner of Franklin Street,) BOSTON. HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One Dollar a year.]